

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FLORIDA PORTS COUNCIL

Website: www.flaports.org

TITLE:

Request for Proposals for Government Relations, Event Management
and Communications Services

PROPOSAL DUE DATE/TIME: JANUARY 16, 2026

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit responses (Proposals) from qualified firms or individuals (Proposer) to provide State and Federal Government Relations, Event Management and Communications Services (“Services”) to the Florida Ports Council (Council). The successful firm will develop and implement the necessary strategies to provide the Services to support the mission and interests of the Council. Respondents to this RFP should have an established reputation, documented experience and demonstrated success in providing the Services to industry associations or government related trade groups in which its members share common or related mission purpose. Respondent proposals must identify appropriately experienced personnel and resources, either in-house or by sub-contract to Proposer, illustrating their capabilities and success in executing comprehensive strategies and tactics with highly favorable outcomes.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Electronic Submittals are preferred and highly encouraged. Proposals shall be submitted electronically via email at drussell@joneswalker.com. Proposals will be retained as property of Florida Ports Council.

Late Proposals will not be considered.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

A Pre-Proposal Conference will not be held for this solicitation.

CONTRACT AND CONTRACT TERM

Respondents shall provide a draft Sample Contract to the Florida Ports Council for review and consideration of the services described therein. Florida Ports Council reserves the right to modify the proposed contract via negotiation. Time is of the essence; therefore, Proposer should be prepared to execute the Contract in a timely manner upon selection in order to begin the work required within the timeframe established.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The successful Respondent shall comply with all local, State, and Federal statutes, regulations, directives and orders as applicable to the services provided and offered to Florida Ports Council.

CONVICTED VENDOR, DISCRIMINATORY VENDOR LISTS, AND SCRUTINIZED COMPANIES LIST

Pursuant to Subsections 287.133(2) and (3), Florida Statutes, Respondent acknowledges that a person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a bid or proposal.

Pursuant to Subsection 287.134(2)(a), Florida Statutes, Respondent acknowledges that an entity or affiliate who has been placed on the discriminatory vendor list may not submit a bid, proposal.

Pursuant to Section 287.135, Florida Statutes, Respondent acknowledges that a company that has been placed on the Scrutinized Companies with Activities in Sudan List; the Scrutinized Companies with Activities in the Iran Petroleum Energy Section List; or the Scrutinized Companies that Boycott Israel List or a company that engages in a boycott of Israel, is ineligible and may not submit a bid or proposal.

All proposals shall further certify that the Bidder is not on either such List and further that it does not have business operations in Cuba or Syria as required by Section 287.135(5), Florida Statutes.

BIDDER INQUIRIES

All inquiries are subject to distribution to all Proposers. Any contact with Florida Ports Council staff, Board members, Advisors (other than listed above), and other key Services stakeholders by a Proposer concerning any matter relating to this procurement is prohibited and is grounds for disqualification.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

Florida Ports Council may award multiple contracts for this RFP. Notifications shall be made via email.

EXECUTION OF CONTRACT/

The Respondent agrees upon receipt of the Notice of Award, and a final Contract, Respondent shall execute and deliver to Florida Ports Council two (2) original signed copies of the Agreement, and the Certificates of Insurance required herein, within ten (10) business days.

BID BOND

The Florida Bid Bond is not required for this solicitation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

Prior to a recommendation for award, Florida Ports Council will require the top ranked Respondent(s) to demonstrate qualifications to furnish the specified goods and/or services. Respondents must be prepared to submit written information requested by Florida Ports Council within five (5) business days of a request. Florida Ports Council may review Respondent's prior experience, references and previous Contracts for similar goods and/or services.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work for this RFP is detailed in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

E-VERIFY REQUIRED

In accordance with Section 448.095, Florida Statutes, the Consultant agrees to register with and utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees hired during the term of the Contract for the services specified in the Contract. The Consultant must also include a requirement in subcontracts that the subcontractor must register with and utilize the E-Verify system to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees hired by the subcontractor, the subcontractor must provide the Consultant with an affidavit stating that the subcontractor does not employ, contract with, or subcontract with an unauthorized alien. The Consultant shall maintain a copy of such affidavit for the duration of the Contract. If Florida Ports Council has a good faith belief that the Consultant has knowingly violated Section 448.09(1), Florida Statutes, Florida Ports Council shall terminate the Contract with the Consultant, and the Consultant may not be awarded a Contract with Florida Ports Council for at least one (1) year after the date on which the Contract was terminated. The Consultant is liable for any additional costs incurred by Florida Ports Council as a result of the termination of the Contract. If Florida Ports Council has a good faith belief that a subcontractor knowingly violated the law, but the Consultant has otherwise complied with the law, Florida Ports Council shall promptly notify the Consultant and order the Consultant to immediately terminate the Contract with the subcontractor.

ADDENDA

Florida Ports Council reserves the right to revise or amend this RFP. Such revisions and amendments, if any, shall be announced by Addenda to this RFP. Copies of such Addenda shall be provided via email.

MINOR IRREGULARITIES

Florida Ports Council reserves the right to either; 1) waive any minor irregularities or clerical errors which are not material to the RFP or which do not prejudice other Respondents; or 2) to reject any and all Responses submitted as non-responsive. Conditional Proposals or those which take exception to any provision of the RFP may be considered non-responsive and may be rejected.

FPC'S RIGHTS

Florida Ports Council reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to:

- A. Amend, suspend, or terminate this RFP;
- B. Revise and modify, at any time prior to the submittal due date, factors it will consider in evaluating Proposals and to otherwise revise its evaluation methodology;
- C. Seek additional relevant information and clarification regarding any Respondent's qualifications to perform the work and to determine whether a Respondent is deemed responsive and responsible based on that information;
- D. Extend dates, time periods or deadlines in this RFP;
- E. Reject any and all Proposals in whole or in part which are non-conforming, non-responsive, or conditional Proposals;
- F. Waive minor deficiencies, informalities, irregularities or defects;
- G. Suspend and/or terminate this procurement process at any time;
- H. Hold meetings and conduct discussions and issue correspondence with one or more of the Respondents to seek an improved understanding and evaluation of the Proposals;
- I. Use assistance of outside advisors (e.g., technical, financial, procurement and legal advisors) in the evaluation process;
- J. Accept Proposals that in its judgment will be in the best interest of Florida Ports Council;
- K. Suspend, discontinue and/or terminate negotiations at any time prior to the actual authorized execution of a Contract by all parties;
- L. Florida Ports Council expressly reserves the right to exercise all rights available to it under this Section and other Provisions of applicable Florida law pertaining to this RFP without incurring any liability for costs, expenses or damages of any nature whatsoever suffered or incurred by any Respondent, team member or any other person.

DISQUALIFICATION/REJECTION

Without limiting the foregoing, Florida Ports Council may disqualify and reject any respondent (including its sub-consultants, affiliates, partners and parent organizations) that:

- A. Fails to include information in its Proposal required by this RFP;
- B. Currently represents a domestic or foreign port;
- C. Engages in conduct prohibited by this RFP;
- D. Fails to obtain Florida Ports Council's consent for any action when required by this RFP;
- E. Is involved in pending litigation concerning Florida Ports Council or its members;
- F. Submits false or misleading information in its Proposal;
- G. Has a conflict of interest;
- H. Fails to disclose any information which, if disclosed, would materially adversely affect Florida Ports Council's evaluation of the Proposal; or
- I. Otherwise fails to comply with or breaches any material requirement of this RFP.

PROPOSAL COSTS AND EXPENSES

All costs and expenses incurred by a Respondent, or any person working on behalf of a Respondent, in connection with the RFP, including the preparation and submission of a Proposal, providing additional information, attendance at meetings, presentations or interviews, and any

other actions taken by a Respondent in response to the RFP shall be the sole responsibility of the Respondent. Florida Ports Council and its agents, officers and directors shall have no responsibility or liability for any costs, damages or expenses incurred by Respondent, team members or any other person as a result of this RFP.

NON-BINDING

The issuance of this RFP does not bind or obligate Florida Ports Council to enter into a Contract with any person or legal entity, no does the RFP constitute an offer to enter into a Contract with any person or entity. Florida Ports Council and its agents and representatives are not liable for any delays, interruptions, failure or irregularities in sending or receipt of any communications or submissions, or for the loss, misdirection or corruption of any such communication by Respondent with Florida Ports Council. Respondent is solely responsible for meeting all deadlines and submission requirements of this RFP.

NONCONFORMING

Proposal may be deemed nonconforming if it contains omissions, erasures, alterations, or additions of any kind is obviously unbalanced, or if it in any manner fails to conform to the requirements provided for herein.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

By submitting a Proposal, Respondent attests, under penalty of perjury, that Respondent does not use coercion for labor or services as defined in Section 787.06, Florida Statutes.

PREPARATION AND REVIEW

Proposer is solely responsible for conducting their own independent research and due diligence in the preparation of a Proposal and the subsequent delivery of services under the Contract.

PROCESS AND EVALUATION INFORMATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

It is Florida Ports Council's intention to solicit responses from potentially qualified Respondents. To evaluate the Proposals, the Selection Committee may consider both written submittals and interviews/presentations. Florida Ports Council will evaluate all qualifying Proposals. Florida Ports Council reserves the right to request additional information and clarification of any information submitted.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Proposals will be evaluated by a Florida Ports Council Selection Committee in accordance with FPC policies and procedures. The Selection Committee members will score the Proposals based on the scoring criteria determined by the Florida Ports Council.

Written Submittal and interview presentations, if any, may be considered to determine the best overall qualified Respondent to be recommended to the Board of Directors for award. A Notice of Intent to Negotiate and Award shall be provided via email.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT

INSTRUCTIONS

The Respondent's Proposal must be submitted in accordance with these instructions. Failure to follow these instructions could be cause for rejection of the Proposal. Submittals should be tabbed and divided in accordance with the sections outlined below for ease of review. Submittals must be in a font no smaller than 11 point and adhere to the page limits set forth herein. Proposals may be two-sided and each side of type size 8 1/2" by 11" will equal one page.

PROPOSALS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Section 1 – Transmittal Letter (limit 3 pages)

- Name and address of Proposer and the contact individual authorized to execute Contracts with Florida Ports Council.
- Briefly describe Proposer's history, ownership, organizational structure, location of headquarters and other facilities.
- For the office which will service the Florida Ports Council account, provide the office location, number of staff and managerial personnel assigned to this location and activities performed at this location. Identify those staff who would be assigned to this task.
- Describe the type of services provided by Proposer, types of clients and length of time in the industry. Provide contact information for the project manager. Provide an overview of the Proposer's service capabilities.
- Confirm compliance with the insurance requirements detailed in Exhibit B.

Section 2 – Contract Document

Provide a written Sample Contract for consideration. Florida Ports Council reserves the right to negotiate any and all proposed terms prior to executing.

Section 3 – Disclosures and Conflict of Interest (limit 2 pages)

Provide the following statements/clarifications:

- State that Proposer is not currently in violation of any regulatory rules and regulations that may have an impact on the Proposer's operations.
- Describe any past, pending or threatened litigation or regulatory action involving any Florida Port.
- Disclose any potential conflict of interest which would adversely affect the Respondent's ability to provide fair, loyal and competitive services to Florida Ports Council.

Section 4 – Relevant Project Experience (limit 6 pages)

- Briefly describe your understanding of Florida Ports Council, its mission, and future goals.
- Briefly describe Proposer's general experience and capabilities in providing services consistent with those detailed in Exhibit A.
- Provide a detailed response of any and all experience with association management and meeting planning.
- Going back no more than five (5) years, provide a minimum of three (3) and maximum of five (5) examples of Contract performed and the respective clients. For each example provide the following:
 - Name and location of the client along with a contact person and their email address and phone number.
 - Proposer's assignment including deliverables, project approach and outcomes.
 - Team members who participated and their roles and contributions.
 - Examples of documented results.

- Provide resumes for proposed team members who would provide service to Florida Ports Council. (Resumes not included in page count.)

Section 5 – Pricing and Fees (2 pages)

- Respondent shall propose a monthly rate for administration of the FPC Contract and Scope of Services. This monthly rate shall not include any negotiated reimbursable expenses, for example, expenses related to event management (i.e., securing room blocks, meeting space, and A/V rental) or sponsorships.
- Respondent shall propose an hourly rate for their representation of the Florida Ports Council for legal representation, if legal is part of Respondent's submission.
- Respondent shall provide discounted hourly rates for representation of any individual Florida ports on specific issues approved by the Florida Ports Council

EXHIBIT A

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Management of the Florida Ports Council

Consultants shall act as the administrator of the Florida Ports Council **“FPC”**, which is governed by the Board of Directors comprised of Port Directors from the 16 statutory Florida Seaports. Consultants shall be highly experienced in association and board management.

Support for the FPC Board of Directors

Consultants shall receive and respond to communications and directives from FPC Board members and staff within one business day. They shall monitor and facilitate requests to include, but not limited to, the legislature, the executive branch and agencies, the media, other trade organizations, and work with the FPC on a timely response.

Consultants shall coordinate with the FPC Chair and Board members to develop the agenda for Board meetings and plan the schedule for each meeting and timely notify members and staff prior to each meeting. Consultant shall provide notice of meetings according to FPC by-laws and prepare all documentation before and after each Board meeting to include, but not limited to, agendas, member packets, membership reports, meeting minutes, financial statements and budgets.

Financial Management

Consultants shall prepare all financial reports and backup materials and work with CPA to prepare audits and IRS documents.

Consultants shall track all revenue and expenditure through an accounting software system and provide the FPC Treasurer and Board with a monthly status report. Consultants shall provide Board members with financial status reports at all Board meetings.

Government Relations

Consultants shall be highly experienced in federal and state legislative and executive affairs and must be able to advise on how to successfully navigate issues. Consultants shall be familiar with projects, activities, and initiatives of various federal and state agencies having regulatory or budgetary oversight of seaports and their operations, maritime industry or trade and possess the ability to provide sound and reasonable advice to the Council regarding possible impacts or interactions with FPC. When necessary or as directed, Consultants shall represent FPC in matters before Florida and U.S. legislative and executive bodies, and maintaining regular contact with key staff or elected members of these bodies.

Consultants shall assist the FPC in developing an annual federal and state legislative agenda. Consultants shall advocate for grant funding and other one-time or recurring appropriations to be made available to FPC. Consultants shall develop and build relationships with legislative and executive staff on behalf of the Florida Ports. Consultants shall perform other advocacy services not specifically enumerated but similar in nature as needed and at the direction of the Florida Ports Council Board.

Consultants shall provide regular legislative updates and online briefings to FPC Board members, staff, and Port contract consultants during the Florida legislative session, and at other times as determined necessary by the FPC. The FPC may also request the same for matters pending at the federal level.

Consultants shall provide legislative tracking communications on a consistent basis during the Congressional and State of Florida legislative sessions, with at minimum monthly communications to the Council, or when and as potentially impactful legislative action occurs. Consultant shall organize and publish in advance a schedule of quarterly calls for Council members to discuss relevant issues. Consultant shall provide alerts and arrange for calls on legislative and executive branch issues that are urgent and/or potentially impactful on an as-needed basis.

Event Management

Consultants shall be responsible for organizing a minimum of three (3) in-person annual events, to include securing hotel room block, conference meeting place, all ancillary services necessary for hosting governance meetings, drafting agendas and preparing meeting materials, and securing external guests, such as selected officials, state and federal committee and executive branch staff. Consultants shall facilitate and attend in-person the following events:

- 1) Tallahassee meeting scheduled during a Florida legislature committee week or regular session that includes securing group or one-on-one meetings with key legislative or Administration members and preparing appropriate leave-behind materials;
- 2) Washington, D.C. “Fly-In” scheduled when Members of Congress will be in session including one-on-one meetings with key Members of House and Senate and preparing appropriate leave-behind materials; and,
- 3) Annual Florida Ports Council Meeting to be held either late-summer or early-fall at a location near a FPC member port on a rotational basis.

Consultants shall be responsible for representing Florida Ports Council at any other industry events at the direction and approval of the Board of Florida Ports Council.

Communications

Consultants shall develop and execute a communication and social media outreach strategy that promotes the Florida Ports system, include managing the communications including, but not limited to, press releases, announcements, position statements, and letters of support, as well as manage content and administration of the Council’s website and social media accounts.

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Exhibit B

Florida Ports Council General Insurance Requirements Matrix

Contract Type	Up to \$100,000	\$100,001 to \$1,000,000	\$1,000,001 & Over
Professional Services	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
As-Needed Professional Services	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Goods & Services	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Construction	N/A	N/A	Tier 3

Insurance Type	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
General Liability	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$5,000,000
Automobile	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Workers Compensation	Statutory	Statutory	Statutory
Umbrella/Excess	Up to GL	Up to GL	Up to GL
Professional Liability	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000